



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CONNECTICUT, INC.

CGA Government Administration and Elections Committee

February 17, 2012 Public Hearing

Comments Submitted by Pat Reilly, Connecticut League of Women Voters, Ethics Specialist

Comments On:

SB 36 AAC REVISIONS TO THE STATE CODES OF ETHICS

I am Pat Reilly, Ethics Specialist for the League of Women Voters of Connecticut. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB 36 AAC REVISIONS TO THE STATE CODES OF ETHICS.

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut, a statewide organization with over 2100 members, believes that the public should have confidence in the integrity of its government. Government officials and employees should be held accountable for carrying out their duties in both an effective and ethically responsible manner. To accomplish these ends, the League supports efforts to reform, strengthen and clarify Connecticut's Code of Ethics for Public Officials, as well as measures to ensure the existence of a strong, independent, effective Office of State Ethics.

In general the League is very supportive of Senate Bill 36.

- Regarding the Citizen's Ethics Advisory Board (CEAB), minimizing the possibility of a lack of a quorum; staggering terms so that at most two members would be replaced each year; permitting members to continue serving for the limited purpose of adjudicating at a board meeting; allowing justices of the peace and notaries to serve on the CEAB; and restricting the staff of the OSE and members of the CEAB from participating in political campaigns of individuals who are subject to the jurisdiction to the Code of Ethics for Public Officials. These measures strengthen the functioning and governance of the OSE and the CEAB and will lead to public confidence in the integrity of its government.
- We welcome measures that apply to state contractors. One such provision adds violations against ethical standards found in C.G.S. Section 1-101nn as grounds for disqualifying a state

contractor. A comprehensive code of ethics applicable to state contractors is crucial to the transparent, efficient, cost effective operation of the state of Connecticut.

- Giving the OSE the ability to enforce existing revolving door provisions that apply to the Gaming Policy Board is a welcome challenge to influence peddling and its negative impact on both government and business.

SB 36 section 6 adds the word “knowingly” to the existing (C.G.S §1-84) provision that prohibits public officials and employees from counseling, authorizing or sanctioning violations of the code of ethics.. The League does not support this change. The burden of determining whether a code was broken knowingly or unknowingly may undermine enforcement.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify on this bill.

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